

A CHRISTMAS BELL.

IT WASN'T a very big bell, but roomy enough for the bell.

For it swung way out to the breezes when it had anything to tell.

At once it seemed to sing for me, when I pulled the worn old rope.

A sound like some holy message that was full of blessed hope.

An' its tones was sweet an' soft like a woman's when she tries

To hush the wee ones cuddin' down, an' close their sleepy eyes.

Yes! Tender as some soft lullaby that mother used to sing.

'Twould make or hush or me again, to hear the 'ol' bell ring.

On Christmas we wuz wedded, an' 'twas then the bell was hung.

I recollect how full of joy it sounded when it rung.

So many things it said to us so clear an' strong,

Like or heavenly benediction on our path—

An' Susan whispered soft, "Amen!" as if 'twas sayin' or grace.

Smilin' so sweet up in my eyes as the snow-flakes kissed her face.

An' "peace on earth, good will to men," the echoes seemed to bring.

Just like the song of Bethlehem, to hear the 'ol' bell ring.

The golden cross a-shinin' on the steeple up so high.

Was like a holy finger pointin' upward toward the sky.

An' one by one the stars peeped out, a-gleamin' through the night.

Et thought Almighty meant each man to have or better light.

Ther' belfry tower seemed hallowed, as a place midway between

The earth below an' heaven above, where angels some unseen:

An' when they whispered to it the secrets that they bring.

I paid a hush, and what they spoke I heard the 'ol' bell ring.

As we through all the passin' years a friend without alloy,

Shared with me my burdens, my sorrows an' my joy.

Almos' a-livin' thing it seemed, a-swingin' in to and fro.

With me a-swingin' on the rope an' standin' in the glow.

An' such a hush or comfort then it sounded to me there.

I had to hush or every night the little waddin' pair.

Just as I might tech it; and, oh! it seemed to bring

Me purty high to Heaven, to hear the 'ol' bell ring.

—Walter S. Stanahan, in Chicago News.

A WOLF'S CHRISTMAS.

GOIN' pa'tridge huntin', be ye?" Hiram Hull asked, as he poured four pounds of No. 6 shot from the scoop of the scales into one of the conical packages that our storekeeper before the era of paper bags.

"Well no, not exactly huntin'," I answered with the view to the possible need of excuses for an empty bag. "I'm going over to Bradley's to spend Christmas, and didn't know but I might see a pa'tridge." It would have been "stuck up" to call our best game bird "pa'tridge," and no one would have recognized it under the name of "ruffed grouse."

"You hain't goin' to hoof it over the mountain?" he asked, with the end of the string between his teeth as he wound the package with a frugal allowance of packthread. I nodded an affirmation while I silently admired his thrifty habit of putting the few spilled pellets into the box of unsold shot.

"Wal, then, ye'd better let me put ye up a pound or two o' buckshot."

"No, sir," I said, in a tone expressive of reproof for the suggestion. "I've no use for buckshot this time of year," for the close time for deer began with the month.

"Of course not, but you'd want something bigger'n number sixes if the wolves got after ye," said Hiram, making a persuasive dip into the box of buckshot.

"Wolves," said I, contemptuously; "why, there hain't been a wolf around here for 20 years."

"Wal, there is, now, a pack o' seven, anyway, an' mebbe more. Why, hain't you heard? Amos Barker seen 'em full tilt after a deer an' counted 'em, seven o' 'em. His man at was helpin' of him on his coalin' job said there was 12, but Amos reckoned he see double or counted some o' 'em twice, an' there's lots o' folks 'at 's heard 'em. There's wolves haintin' the mountain, you may depend. Better le' me weigh you about a couple o' pound."

"No, I guess it won't pay to carry any extra weight on that chance," I said, admiring the storekeeper's cunning attempt to sell me something I did not want. "But you may put up that small doil and that Jack-in-the-box for me. They're light and they'll tickle Billy's two little shavers. Then put up a half dozen crackers and a bit of cheese for lunch, fill my tobacco box, and let me have an extra pipe, and I'll be off. I want to make the trip by daylight."

"I hope ye will, I raly do. I wouldn't want to have you get ketched in the dark on the mountain. So you're goin' right over to Bradley's, be ye?" he continued, as he shuffled about behind the counter to put up the articles for me, and then began rummaging in a drawer of odds and ends. "Now, I wonder if you wouldn't jast as lives take him a pair o' bullet molds 'at Aaron Clark left here for him, last spring. I guess it was. Hiram found the molds after a short

search, and, slipping them into my pocket with the other articles, I retired to my bachelor quarters over Miss Diantha Gridley's tailor shop, where, after transferring the shot to a spring-top pouch, and filling my flask with better powder than Hiram sold, and exchanging my leather boots for a pair of sheepskin boots tanned with the wool on, which were then the most approved winter footgear, with my double gun on my shoulder to lighten my steps, I set forth on the ten-mile tramp.

Crossing the little river that turned the mills and forge of our village, and following the road as far as it ran in my direction, I held across the fields to the woods, before entering which I set my compass for my intended course.

When the backbone of the mountain was reached and my journey half accomplished, I had but one pa'tridge, but there was a chance of more in the stretch of forest that lay before me, partial glimpses of which I now had through the stunted oaks, and pines that scantily clad the rocky ridge.

The weather was exceedingly mild for the season, a circumstance which proved very fortunate for me, and as I was quite comfortable in the warmth of the low midday sun, I gave my legs a good rest while I ate my lunch and lazily smoked and dreamed in the midst of the quietude.

There was not a sound to be heard above the constant murmur of the pines and the occasional rustle of an unfallen leaf withered, nor was a living thing to be seen but a mile of a winter when exploring the intricacies of a fallen tree-top, and a few flies that were buzzing about the sunny side of a tree trunk.

As I began my way down the mountain a glance at the sun showed me we were likely to part company before my journey was ended. Half a mile further on, in an old charcoal clearing, I flushed a pa'tridge, at which I took a snapshot that knocked a cloud of feathers out of the bird without retarding its flight; but I was sure it was hard hit, and began a diligent search where it had disappeared at the edge of the clearing.

Looking the ground over carefully, step by step, I had gone much further than one who does not know how far a mortally wounded grouse can fly would think it of any use to search, when I heard, far behind me, what I took to be the piteous howl of a lost hound.

I was wishing the poor fellow might find my track and come up to me, when the long-drawn, plaintive wail was repeated at a point so distant from the first that it was evident it could not have been uttered by the same animal, and presently it was taken up at another distant point.

Still groping over the ground in search of the dead bird, I wondered at so many hounds having gone astray

in diameter at the base of the trunk, which for ten feet up to the whorls of sturdy green boughs bristled with stiles of dead limbs that made convenient steps.

My gun was of German make, rigged with a sling, which till now I had always thought a useless appendage, but in this emergency it proved quite otherwise, when by slinging the gun over my back I got up, easily and quickly. None too quickly, for in two minutes the leaders of the pack were beneath me, and glaring up at me with cruel, hungry eyes, having evidently seen my ascent, for they were not at fault a moment.

Others came till there were seven in all, some circling about the tree, some sitting on their haunches and treading impatiently with their forefeet, like a dog waiting for a choice morsel, and licking their slavering chops; some gnawed at the trunk or made prodigious leaps at the lower branches.

I climbed to a secure and comfortable seat on a limb 20 feet from the ground, and, after getting my breath, and my nerves were a little settled, I tried the effect of a charge of No. 6 on one of the besiegers, as I got a tolerable fair aim at his uplifted muzzle through an opening. There was a yelp of surprise and pain, followed by a general commotion among the crew, and when the smoke had lifted above me I caught glimpses of the stung brute clawing his head with alternate forepaws.

I fired several times as opportunity offered, but desisted when it became evident that instead of driving off my assailants the sting of the small shot made them the more savagely persistent.

I tried slugging the shot in a cartridge made of a bit of the lining of my coat, but it amounted to nothing. Bewailing the incredulity which had made me refuse the buckshot, I was at my wit's end how to raise the siege.

Perhaps my supply of provisions would last till the enemy was starved out, if the weather did not turn cold and freeze me on my roost, which was a prospect less agreeable than that of subsisting on raw pa'tridge flesh.

Then it occurred to me to climb to the top and see if there was any chance of making alarm shots heard down in the settlements. Slinging my gun, I began the ascent. But ten feet further up the pine came to an end, for there the whole top was broken off just above a whorl of stout branches onto which I climbed, but could get no outlook through the tree tops.

I filled and lighted my pipe, and, chancing to throw the unextinguished match onto the stub, which was broken about square across, and was at least a foot in diameter, it ignited a handful of dry pine needles that alighted there. The flame lasted but a moment, yet long enough to suggest the idea that

The bullets were much too small for the bore of my gun, therefore I put two in each barrel, with a light charge of shot, and descended to the lower branch, where I seated myself upon the one where I could get the clearest view of the ground.

The wolves greeted my reappearance with a chorus of savage yelps as they gathered eagerly beneath me, snapping and snarling, each struggling for the nearest place that he might be first at the expected feast. One grizzled old fellow, the patriarch of the tribe, who had curled himself up in the fallen tree-top, to bide my downfall, now had his philosophical patience overcome and limped forth from his hair, sneaking around the outskirts of the crowd with his hungry eyes constantly upon me. The largest and strongest of the pack kept the position directly under me, now springing upward more than his length, then tumbling back upon his mates that crowded beneath him, now standing upright on his hinder feet and pawing the air and snapping his fanged jaws viciously. While he was in this posture I fired one barrel straight into his mouth.

The recoil almost unseated me, but I recovered myself with no greater mishap than losing the toys out of my pocket. The big wolf made no motion but to sink in a lifeless heap with the back of his head blown out. The others scattered a little, but presently returned, sniffling at their dead comrade and lapping his blood. Poor Dolly got a cruel bite from one that spoiled her beauty forever. Another nosing Jack-in-the-box unhooked the lid, whereupon the little imp filled his snout, and I could not help laughing at the fright it gave the great cowardly brute.

I fired the second barrel at the old grandfather as he warily skulked past, beyond the others, and the charge broke his back. He writhed about, biting the wound a moment, and then, dragging his paralyzed hinder parts, crawled out of sight. The others were getting somewhat shy, but plucked up courage during the cessation of hostilities, while I reloaded, and then came close under me again.

A third shot killed one nearly outright, and the fourth broke the shoulder of another as he ran. He retreated to a safe distance and amused himself with his wound, while the unhurt survivors stood off, now regarding curiously their dead and wounded companions, now me, with growing respect, and evidently doubting whether it was worth their while to continue any longer in my neighborhood.

When my gun was reloaded I settled the question for them with two shots. The first one bore such a hole in the belly of one that his entrails dragged upon the ground, and the second stung another so sharply that he stood not on the order of his going, but made off in all speed in company with his unseated comrade, while the fellow with the broken shoulder hobbled after them, and the other poor wretch tried to follow them, turning now and again to bite his own entrails, entangling his feet and catching on stubs and stones.

Evening was already deepening the forest shadows, and I had little time to spare in mercy to the merciless brute, but when I got to the ground I hastily loaded my gun and finished him with a shot in the head.

Then, picking up the toys and taking my course by the compass and the evening star, I held forward at such speed as the rough and darkening way would permit. Fortunately, the almost full moon was well up in the clear sky, and I had little difficulty in finding my way down the mountain and reached Bradley's before their early bedtime.

Little Molly Bradley prized the doll all the more for the scars which proved her hairbreadth escape, and her brother looked upon the Jack-in-the-box that had scared a wolf as a hero as doughty as Jack the Giant Killer.

Their father seemed to doubt my story till I led him to the scene of my adventure the next morning, and showed him the four wolves, for we found the broken-backed patriarch after a short search.

When we returned with the pelts the Christmas dinner was ready for us, no mean part of it being the pa'tridges, much more nicely cooked by Mrs. Bradley than I could have done it on the tree stump had I been obliged to.

When I went home the next day there was a full pouch of buckshot in my pocket, but I found no use for it.—Rowland Robinson, in Chicago Inter Ocean.



THE LEADERS OF THE PACK WERE BENEATH ME.

that day, when, just as I found my bird lying belly up, stone dead, I also came upon something that gave me a startling enlightenment.

The fallen leaves and the soil were torn and furrowed and stones and patches of moss were overturned, in evidence of a desperate struggle, the result of which was plainly shown by the antlered skull and scattered bones of a deer and a mat of coarse gray hair trodden into the mold.

Hiram's wolves were no harmless creatures of the imagination, but savage realities, and a chill ran down my back as I realized the probability that the pack was now rallying on my trail. I did not doubt that I had heard their voices.

I took my bearings and went forward at my best pace with far less thought of hunting than the fear of being hunted. Thus I went on for half an hour, hearing nothing but the snapping of twigs and swish of branches made by my own rapid progress, till a clamor of jays broke out 40 rods in my rear. As it drew near it was mingled with the rattle and patter of many swift feet. I was near the crest of one of the ledges that ridge crosswise the long westerly incline of the mountainside, and, looking backward down the slope, I saw two wolves break through the undergrowth of whortleberry bushes, and had glimpses of others behind them.

My next look was for a tree that could be climbed, and I was fortunate in discovering one close at hand, a low-branching one of more than two feet

fire enough might be built here to roast small bits of the pa'tridge, and close upon this followed another, which gave me hope of deliverance.

There was the bullet mold in my pocket, and if I could but manage to turn my paltry shot into a dozen good solid balls I would soon rid myself of the wolves. As I was refilling my pipe with a view of stimulating invention my tobacco box gave me a clew to a solution of the problem. It was an old-fashioned steel box with a hinged cover and square corners that would serve as a spout to pour melted lead from.

I transferred the tobacco to a pocket, made a cut of a small green limb firmly to the open cover for a handle, and had what promised to be a serviceable smelting ladle. Then, reaching out, I gathered some dry twigs and bits of branches, and I soon had a small fire burning in the center of the stub. When it was well going I held the improvised ladle, with a couple ounces of shot in it, over the hottest place, and, after some patient waiting, had the satisfaction of seeing the separate pellets become a little puddle of molten lead. I managed to pour most of it into the mold and got three good bullets at the first smelting, but lost one, which fell to the ground.

Better luck attended three more successive trials, which gave me 13 bullets, making 13 in all, which I thought might answer my purpose, and I whipped out the fire with a green branch.

It was now near sundown, so there was no time to be lost if I was to get away by daylight.



Do you see the boy?
I see the boy.
Do you see the boy's glad smile?
I see the boy's glad smile.
Why does the boy seem so happy?
The boy has just made out a list of what he wants Santa Claus to bring him and given it to papa.
Can you pick out the boy's papa?
You bet I can.
How can you pick him out?
By his sad and sorrowful face.—Chicago Post.

HANNA'S TAX TALK.

A pleasant Reminder of the Innateness of Republican Ideas in General.

Mark Hanna's patronizing way of telling the people what he thinks should be done for them is truly amusing. He favors an indirect tax by means of a tariff, because "when the people do not know they are paying a tax they are better satisfied." This is an old principle which has been the guiding star of monarchs and despots for many centuries, but Mark seems to have just made the discovery, and it comforts so well with his natural disposition to do mean things in an underhand way that he gushes over it. We advise him, however, not to fool the American people too much, for they have a way of finding things out, and then making it warm for the "fooler." We have known them on such occasions to give the fool-killer employment for quite a length of time, and circumstances might arise that would make life a burden to Mark.

The senator's latest information vouchsafed to a waiting public is to the effect that he "favors putting duties on tea, coffee and other articles which we cannot produce." This is a pleasant reminder for those insane persons who voted the republican ticket at the late election "just as a compliment to President McKinley's management of the war." We are not only to have an indefinite prolongation of the existing war taxes, which are all the more exasperating because they were unnecessary, but we must also pay a tax, "without knowing it," on the few free luxuries that are left to us. While the senator from Ohio is acquiring historical knowledge for the benefit of the country that he has kindly consented to hold up, we advise him to read the account of a certain people who once lived in a town called Boston, who stirred up an awful row about paying a tariff on tea.

FALSE PROPOSITIONS.

Arguments of Goldbug Mouthers Which Are Contradictory of Themselves.

It is certainly amusing to hear a gold standard advocate seriously proclaiming with great emphasis that the free coinage of silver would certainly drive gold out of circulation, eliminating the more than \$700,000,000 which the treasury department insists there is gold in the money supply of the country, amounting to about nine dollars of the \$24 per capita we are told there is in circulation, and that the effect of this retirement of one-third of the total money in the country would be to reduce the purchasing power or exchange value of the dollars that were left! Ordinary intelligence would reason differently. It would say:

"If \$7 dollars, 27 men or 27 teams were required to do a given quantity of work, the withdrawal of one-third of the dollars, men or teams would increase by one-half the amount of work to be done by 18 dollars, men or teams, and to that extent must increase their value as producing forces. If it requires 24 dollars per capita to do the business of the country, and one-third of that money is withdrawn, then the remaining two-thirds must do all the business, and it cannot be that the dollars that do more business will be worth less than the dollars that do less business."

But why should the gold dollars go away? Dollars, like men, go where they are most needed and can earn most, and all the gold, silver and paper money we have is needed to do the business to be done, then the withdrawal of any considerable quantity of either must increase the work and the value of the others, and this will bring back the wanderers, or others to take their places. If there are now too many dollars to do the work to be done, as some gold standard advocates hold, then the withdrawal of a part must help rather than harm the conditions. Another thing seems to be clear: Gold is not the money of trade, the money that is

CZAR REED AGAIN IN SESSION.



and threw a lot of the stuff into the sea. There are descendants of these very people now living in the United States, and when Mark lays on his tax that they are not expected to know about they may box his pendant ears and make him bray.—Mississippi Valley Democrat.

The Wool Industry Injured.

While some of our protectionist friends are explaining to the country the success of the Dingley tariff law, and are eloquent in declaring its beauty of adjustment and scientific basis, some others, even of those who helped make the law, are more candid. Thus Mr. S. N. D. North, secretary of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers, is quoted by the Bradford (England) Observer as writing the following to a friend in that city: "I trust you are well, but I should be sorry for you all if I thought that the wool manufacture of Bradford was in as unhappy a condition to-day as it is in the United States." Mr. North, as the secretary of the association, an expert tariff authority in woolen schedules, was in Washington to assist Mr. Dingley in making the bill so scientific. And now, after piling protection sky high, it is found that woolen goods are being protected off the backs of the people, and the industry is unhappy. What a shock this will be to Mr. Dingley, who believed that the only cause to the industry was free wool!—Utica Observer.

Chairman Dingley is perfectly safe in declaring that the war taxes will not be repealed for at least another year. In the first place, government expenses have been greatly increased by the war with Spain, and they are likely to remain heavy for an indefinite period. In the next place, protective duties can no longer be depended on to yield the revenue they formerly did, for imports are declining. In the third place, repeal of the war taxes would cause another enormous deficit, and thus drain away the gold reserve, as was the case during the second Cleveland administration. Lastly, no one objects to the war taxes.—N. Y. Commercial Advertiser (Rep.).

President Garfield, it will be remembered, in his early career in congress, defined his position as favoring "that protection which leads to free trade." It looks as if Mr. Dingley had unconsciously got on to this Garfield platform.—Boston Herald.

Still at the Head.

Russell A. Alger, secretary of war in the cabinet of William McKinley, has given to the people of the United States an official history of the war of '98. It has been edited carefully by Mr. Alger's chief, and aside from its historical matter is a plea for an enlarged standing army, the necessity of which will not be disputed if the authority of the United States is to be maintained completely and satisfactorily in the Antilles and the Philippines. But that official communication which would meet greatest welcome would be the resignation of Russell A. Alger as secretary of war and its acceptance by the president, who ought never have given Alger opportunity to inflict his incompetence upon citizens of the United States who volunteered at the call of his chief to fight their battles. While Russell A. Alger remains secretary of war how is it possible to hope that other than the most desperate of the citizenry of the United States will enlist in its enlarged army? They do not fear the perils of battle, but the perils of Algerism are more than any man ought to be asked by a humane nation to encounter.—Chicago Chronicle.

Secretary Alger has supplied an issue upon which the democracy can appeal with confidence to the national judgment. By asking for over \$166,000,000 for the support of the regular army in time of peace he has raised two questions that touch the heart and the pocket of every American citizen who does not profit by legalized injustice and oppression. These questions are: Shall the United States be more heavily taxed for military purposes than any other country on earth? Shall this unheard-of burden of taxation be carried almost exclusively by people of small means, while the wealth or armaments protect goes free?—N. Y. Journal.

If Dingley isn't careful he will catch cold sitting in the draft of the "open door."—Memphis Commercial Appeal.